

# Cohasset Mariner

The Mariner (and supplements) is a paid circulation newspaper published every Thursday at 541 Plain St., Marshfield, Mass. 02050 for and about the residents of Cohasset. Telephone 383-6321 or 837-3500. Mailing address: Box 71, Cohasset, Mass. 02025. Second class postage paid at Marshfield, Mass. 02050.

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As the Mariner goes to press Tuesday night, all news and advertising copy must be received by Monday at 5 p.m. Classified advertising must be received by Monday at noon. Readers are invited to submit personal items, accounts of social functions, meetings, weddings and engagements. Photographs (black and white glossy) are also welcome.

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## Editorials

### Another Winner

"Coach" Ron Emmons is probably less heralded in Cohasset than John LeVangie, the man who led Cohasset High School to its best basketball season in nearly 50 years. Mr. LeVangie, in reaching the semi-finals of the Division III South tournament, deserves all the bouquets he gets.

So does Ron Emmons.

As coach — director — of the CHS Drama Workshop, Mr. Emmons has cajoled, pleaded, led and probably raised his voice an octave or two in leading Cohasset to the finals of the state Drama Festival in Boston March 30 and 31 at John Hancock Hall: mark it on your calendar.

In winning the semi-finals in Duxbury last week, all 11 members of the Cohasset Drama Workshop were named to the all-star cast. The kids performed *Story Hour* and obviously performed it well.

Last fall, when School Supt. John Maloney commented that Cohasset Schools operate like a 17-jewel watch, we silently hooted, doubting any school anywhere can run with such precision. But a high school that can produce a winning basketball team and a first-rate drama club in the same semester has to be doing something right. If nothing else, it proves the school has depth.

So a well done to John LeVangie, and to Ron Emmons, too.

### The Common Revisited

This past Sunday during services of the First Parish Church, the Rev. Edward Atkinson was explaining the Offertory to some young parishioners. It's more than what goes into the "plate," he said. It includes the choir, flowers and ushers, among other things.

His own offering Sunday was a large, green plastic garbage bag, filled with Cohasset Common trash, that he collected before church. The unsightly state of the Common had upset him, and he wrote about it in the Church newsletter (which was excerpted in the Mariner).

He hadn't included any suggestions for citizen action, however, and consequently decided to launch a "Common Care" program with his own first offering. He asked the congregation to "make a pledge, a second kind of offering" by signing the "Common Care" sheet and by collecting an offering from the Common every Sunday through July.

Church participation in "Common Care" offerings, he said, "might say something about us, our church, and might show others how we think about our town."

It might also prompt others, church goes or no, to do the same. It might even prompt people from using the Common as a Village dump.

## Letters

Letters to the editor on all subjects of local interest are welcome in the Mariner. Our policy requires that letters be signed with appropriate evidence of residency, but names will be withheld on request under certain circumstances.

## Wheels Turn Toward Professional Management

The Committee to Survey the Structure of Town Government met with Selectmen last week to review the possibility of establishing a professional management position for the town. The committee agreed to submit a detailed report outlining the position.

Chairman William Weeks said his committee wished to share the results of their research with most of the other boards in town. There is, he said, a strong feeling to have a professional managerial position set up.

He enumerated the benefits the committee believes the position would create, including: the delegation of the Selectmen's day-to-day functions, the assurance of the continuity of the Selectmen's experience to future boards, better coordination between boards and committees, assistance to the Selectmen in pressing for a larger share of government grants and programs, better service to the townspeople, and more careful expenditure of tax dollars.

The committee wanted the support of the Selectmen, Weeks said, in their pursuit for a position which would aid future boards. It was noted that the daily management of the Selectmen's office by Chairman Arthur Clark wouldn't always be available.

Weeks suggested that an executive secretary or appropriate

professional be gradually implemented in the Selectmen's office or phased-in over a period of time to insure continuous management.

Donna Magee, the committee's secretary, apprised the board of the salaries and lengths of positions held by officials of three towns interviewed by the committee.

The town manager of Sudbury earns \$30,000 a year and has held that post since 1972. Sudbury, of the three towns visited, is the most socio-economically comparable to Cohasset.

Guy Lapriore, Marshfield's first town administrator, appointed two years ago, earns \$28,000 annually. It was noted that Lapriore has obtained a million dollars in grants for his town.

Norwell's David Hughes earns \$22,000 as executive secretary/accountant, a combined position which has been considered by the committee for Cohasset.

Selectman Mary Jeanette Murray responded to the suggestion that the professional assistant could draw grant money to the town. "It's going to be home rule all the way," she said. Federal grants and programs, she feels, are going to be withheld from Cohasset, especially if the town has benefited from them in the past.

Selectman Henry Ainslie said

that the availability of federal grants boils down to the amount of time a person can devote to finding them.

Ainslie disapproved of a combined manager/accountant position. "You can't be the administrator and watchdog of the accounts at the same time," he said.

He continued, "Whether we do it now or in the future, it is certain to me we will have an administrative assistant, or whatever you want to call it. It is a matter of time."

Committee member Philip Bowditch advised the board that it would be unconscionable of them to leave the position Clark has been filling "to serendipity." He referred to the position as an entity to be a surrogate board and a depository of its knowledge.

Murray was still unconvinced of the feasibility of the position and said she was wary about an appointed "centralized authority," who achieved his post with no input from citizens of the town. She was worried, she said, about employing someone who would divorce the Selectmen's office from the people.

Clark said he had no opposition to the creation of the position and agreed that it was "something to work toward." He added, "I agree, I'm not a permanent fixture."

## History Needs Help

By Judith Epstein

If you read the literature the Cohasset Historical Society offers at the three adjacent museums on Elm Street, you will be struck by what is described as undaunting efforts to preserve the information, documents, relics and antiques that mark the history of the town.

That is, if you read the literature.

For if you gained entrance to the museums as I did in the middle of March, with the permission and guidance of Curator Robert Fraser (the museums are open during the summer months only) you would note that preservation and restoration did not mark many of the town's relics in these charming old building. You would also freeze your tootsies off.

As we walked through the Historic House, the Maritime Museum and the Independence our breath was visible, hanging in the air of the rooms that seemed surprised to contain off-season intruders. Fraser said the buildings couldn't be heated because they lacked insulation — as well as the money the Society would need to sink into a very costly project.

"The cold is not as damaging as the heat," Fraser said. "In the summer it gets toasty, and that is worse for the records. I've seen it 130 degrees in the summer and 20 degrees below zero in the

## Commentary

winter.

These extreme temperatures and their concomitant fluctuations in humidity must surely be prime factors in the deterioration of the materials the Historical Society has taken such pains to collect and arrange so beautifully. There are state laws which protect public documents in carefully controlled atmospheres, within fireproof walls, where dehumidifiers and constant temperatures help to insure the longevity of precious records that give a clue of what went on before.

Why has not a better safeguard been practiced by the Historical Society, if only for the purchase of a vault (given the paucity of funds) to protect the most tender of these relics?

Granted, the Lothrop House is being restored and will in the near future house the gowns from the Independence and some of the museums' valuable papers, books and documents. However, in the meantime and certainly for many years past, the contents of the museums have been subjected to other ravages of time besides the polarities of temperature.

There were photographs fading to nonexistence and books with leather bindings crumbling away onto the

shelves. There were documents and papers obliterated by the yellow of age and the green of mildew. There were manikins, whose faces were deformed by the grime of dirty air and again, mildew, modeling once-gorgeous gowns left fully exposed to the wear and tear of an admiring but careless public. And there was the vestige of an appressively hot day, illustrating just how hot it must get in the second story of those places: a curled and twisted candle stood grotesquely in its antique candleholder.

The Historical Society and the people of Cohasset should take steps to better preserve the contents of these museums. I know, having once studied library science, that restoration centers exist, such as the one in Andover which is run by a Captain Cunha — where papers and books of historical societies and libraries can be taken by enterprising individuals who will be taught efficient and inexpensive restoration techniques before their materials deteriorate away forever.

Fraser said he fears fire and theft of the treasures more than their lack of preservation and supposed he will continue doing what has been done — nothing, until the Society gets more money. Before the money arrives, however, something can and should be done, at least to check the more silent, insidious marauders of decay.